

How to: Use CUT (OR COPY) AND PASTE SHORTCUT KEYS

The shortcuts that every (Windows) computer user should know:

CTRL C CTRL V CTRL X

As well as:

CTRL A

These shortcuts have been in Windows since its inception and work in most pieces of software such as text editors, word processors, spreadsheets, web browsers etc.

One other important element needed to make these tools work is the ability to 'select' text or objects such as pictures or files. So let's start there:

Making a 'Selection'

The simplest method is to press the left button on the mouse hold it down while you 'drag' the cursor across an object or piece of text.

However there are other methods:

- Place the cursor at the start of a piece of text you wish to select. Then holding down the SHIFT key left click the mouse at the end of the text you wish to select. Everything between the original cursor position and the last cursor position will be highlighted or 'Selected'.
- To select a single word in a piece of text merely double click on it
- Pressing CTRL A will select everything in a folder or a document.

NB: Within specific programs there are other methods of selecting for example in Microsoft Word triple clicking on a word will select the whole paragraph whereas the same action in Open Office Writer will select the sentence.

What has this to do with 'Cut and Paste'?

To Cut or Copy anything first the object or text must be selected by one of the methods outlined above.

Once the selection has been made then it is available to be manipulated in one of several ways:

1. It can be copied and reproduced elsewhere as many times as is required exactly as it was.

2. It can be copied and reproduced elsewhere as many times as is required taking the format of the surrounding text.
3. It can be removed from its current location and reproduced somewhere else once or many times. As with 1) and 2) it can either retain its original formatting or take the format of the surrounding text.

Let's put this into action:

1. Select some text
2. Press CTRL C (hold down the CTRL key then tap the 'C' key)
3. Move the cursor to a point where you want the copied text to appear (it could be in a different document)
4. Press CTRL V (hold down the CTRL key then tap the 'V' key. If you hold the 'V' key down for too long the keyboard key repeat will kick in and you will have many copies of the text one after another!)
5. If you want extra copies of this merely repeat #4 OR hold down the V key until you have the sequence you want.

'Moving' rather than just 'copying':

If you wish to move the text or object to a different place (as opposed to our last action which made extra entries of the original.)

1. Select some text
2. Press CTRL X (as before hold down the CTRL key then tap the 'X' key)
3. Move the cursor to a point where you want the text to appear (again it could be in a different document)
4. Press CTRL V (hold down the CTRL key then tap the 'V' key. This time the deleted text reappears at the new location.
5. If you want extra copies of this merely repeat #4 OR hold down the V key until you have the sequence you want.

A slight variation on this theme

You will notice that any text copied using this method also takes with it the formatting of the original text (i.e. the font, its characteristics and its size) sometimes this is not desirable and we want the reproduced text to take on the characteristics of the text where it is to be inserted. To achieve this a simple change is made to the process.

1. Select and copy (or cut) the text as before.
2. Place the cursor where you want the text to reappear.
3. Hold down the CTRL AND the SHIFT keys together before tapping the 'V' key. This time a 'Paste Special' option box will appear, select the option

'Unformatted text' and the copied text will take on the characteristics of the surrounding text.

Summing Up

Shortcut keys make these '*copy, cut and paste*' functions so much easier and quicker to use. However remember all these functions are still available in the **EDIT** menu, from the toolbars or from the context menu brought up by right clicking on a selection but once you have got the hang of these short cut keys you won't want to do it any other way.

By the way these same key shortcuts can be used to copy and paste files on your hard disk or pictures and objects in various types of documents but practice first before letting yourself loose on valuable documents or files.

The Last Word - Screen Capture

Another nifty capture built into windows since (I think) Windows 95 is the ability to capture the screen that you are viewing.

To capture the whole screen press **PRTSCRN** key - usually located near the **DELETE** key, to capture just the current window press **ALT + PRTSCRN**.

These actions copy the screen to the clipboard memory and it is just a question of pasting this to a suitable graphics program and saving as a GIF or JPG file

Windows 7 and Vista have an additional built in utility called '*Snipping Tool*' which does the same job but adds a few more useful options.

Open Snipping Tool by clicking the **START** button. In the search box, type *Snipping Tool*, and then, in the list of results, click Snipping Tool (you can right click on it and create a short cut to the program on your desktop if you wish).